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Summary of Briefs Presented to the Royal
Commission on the Status Of Women 1
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SUMMARY OF BRIEFS PRESENTED TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN DURING ALBERTA HEARINGS

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April 22nd and 23rd, 1968.

Calgary Hearings - COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN CANADA.

1. CALGARY JAYCETTES

. Abortion...in cases of Rape
Possibility child defective
Physical or mental harm to the mother
Economic problems
Mentally defective.

. Employment...Removals of discrimination in same
Improvement of women's status in same through retraining.

. Marriage and Divorce...
Marriage too easy, divorce too difficult
Waiting period between license and marriage
Counselling services available before and during marriage.

. Use of women's skills...through
Training courses in flexible hours (nite courses)
Bursaries
Retraining
University courses
Counselling agencies advising what is available.

. Child care through Day Care centres
Licensed babysitters
Older women encouraged into this field.

. Crime...Laws should be applied on the same basis to women and men alike
More rehabilitation programs than are presently available should be developed for women.

2. FARM WOMEN'S UNION OF ALBERTA

. Equal career opportunities...representation of women in the professions, public life and politics inadequate.

. Day Care facilities...privately or publicly owned and licensed by the government.

. Retraining facilities for women wishing continuing education or wishing to enter the professions.

. Premarital counselling.

. Planned parenthood...with birth control information available on request through some government department.

. Educational television...available throughout rural areas...a help in lieu of kindergarten facilities.

. Abortion...wider grounds for same.

. A wife, especially a farm wife should, in view of her contribution, be entitled to half of her husband's estate. There should be no estate tax between marriage partners.

3. MR. HENDERSON...

A PRIVATE BRIEF dealing with how women could help organize stock exchange training for the benefit of the entire group of non-professionals now dabbling in stock.

Charged that Investment Corporation - Government amalgam operates in conflict with the best interests of the unsophisticated family.

4. CALGARY WOMEN'S LIBERAL ASSOCIATION

Improved facilities needed for adult training and retraining. Fair employment practices...more part-time employment...equal rights and responsibilities for women in employment...equal opportunity.

5. ALBERTA WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Noted that on the new provincial juvenile delinquency panel there were no women. Commented it was a very sad state of affairs.

- Retraining facilities required for women.
- Taxation of farmers to be examined, allowing deduction of wife's wages.
- Women find it very difficult to get bank loans, mortgages, etc. because they are women.

6. CALGARY HOME ECONOMICS COUNCIL

- Income tax exemptions for babysitters, daycare use, household help for male or female.
- Suggested Day Care facilities be established with standards set by the province and licensing done by same. Suggested employers could develop some such centres. Subsidies be provided for these centres when necessary.

7. UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB (CALGARY BRANCH)

- Property of married persons to be shared down the middle, except for whatever couple agree to hold privately.
- No estate tax between married people.
- Wages of either partner to be garnisheed for maintenance of children.
- Birth control information available on request.
- Wider grounds for abortion to include...
    - when life or health risk to mother
    - if possibility child defective
    - rape or incest result.
- Sterilization legalized.

8. ALBERTA HOME ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION

- Part-time workers...correlate hours of these women with the school day.
- Encourage employers to hire two part-time workers for one full-time job.
- Retraining program hours also adjusted to part-time basis.

9. VOICE OF WOMEN

- Information required on women's rights and responsibilities.
- Noted women found it difficult to get bank loans on their own.
- Would like public information programs on radio and television.
- Would like to have women interested in public affairs.
- Require credit information.

10. MISS NORMA ROWE...private brief...

. Unattached women are socially isolated. There are pockets of isolation in urban societies. The social aspect of this problem was highlighted.

11. IZZETTE MITCHELL...private brief...

. Property rights of widows who own property and dispose of same after bereavement are not looked after closely enough. No true advice is available to widows on the actual value of any real estate she owns and whether it would be wise to keep it or sell it.

. Women must be trained in economics...monetary values...interested in the family business such as ranching, etc. A committee of peers could be available to advise on value of property she is considering selling.

12. MEDICINE HAT BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

. Requested that "male or female" not be allowed on help wanted advertisements and classifications.

. Asked for equal pensions and pension payments to men and women.

. Noted discrimination in employment and promotion of women, particularly the older woman.

.Single people be allowed to adopt. (Possible in Alberta but not all provinces.)

. Lauded diminishing tax on those under $5,000.00 income as suggested by Carter Report.

. Wife automatically owns half of husband's estate on his death.

13. THE RURAL FARMERS (35 independent women)

. Farmer pay his wife working in fields a wage and be allowed to deduct it as a business expense.

. No estate tax between marriage partners.

. Property shared equally between husband and wife.

. Law against corporations writing off profits from one business by losses from another.

. Marriage age be reviewed with suggestion no one under 16 be allowed to marry

. Income tax and the estate tax work against the working woman.

. Welfare payments be reviewed.

. Equal pay for equal work be enforced.

. Government intervention needed to prevent large corporations buying out family farms.

Commented that people working in agriculture boards for the governments are usually professors and never those who have "plowed a furrow". Deplored this fact.

14. MR. BALFOUR...private brief...

- Women contributing to the family estate should have an easier way of claiming part as their own.
- Consortium law outdated (where husband sues for loss of wife's services).
- Along with divorce legislation Federal government should legislate on alimony, maintenance and custody.
- Companies may sue wife for debt if she has co-signed note.

15. Private brief...

Abortion should be decided on by the woman alone, after her discussing it with a psychiatrist, doctor and counsellor.

EDMONTON HEARINGS...APRIL 24, 25 and 26.

1. UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB (Representing over 500 Alberta women)

The number of graduates re-entering university for updating and retraining is growing. There is a demand for further study which will ease return to the labor force of teachers, librarians, social workers and women in the health services. To facilitate women in this endeavour the following items are necessary at university:

a. Mature counsellors to help the mature women choose subjects and courses to best fit their needs.

b. A Co-ordinating Committee...aware of what resources are available for these women.

...aware of the needs of these women.

...which can cut through administrative difficulties within the university itself.

c. Remove the full-time attendance requirement for professional and graduate studies.

d. Allow greater flexibility in the transfer of credits from one university to another.

e. Make financial assistance available for part-time university students.

f. Help in establishment of day-care centres for the use of the children of university students.

g. Educational television should be set up on a nation-wide basis, using the VHF band. University credit studies should be available by television courses.

2. MRS. TREVOR ANDERSON (A private brief)

Advised women to rely on their female instincts. Said a true woman is behind her man guiding him up the ladder to success. Woman is a complement to man and need not be worried about equal rights. Men will look after them.

3. DEPARTMENT OF EXTENSION, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Both men and women today are benefitting from increased leisure and have time to give attention "to the quality of life".

a. Recommended that extension education costs should be counted as an Income Tax deduction for a person.

b. The government should subsidize the schools to teach French and English to adults.

c. There should be a community training service grant available to women wishing to serve voluntarily in the community.

4. ALBERTA ASSOCIATION OF REGISTERED NURSES (8,383 members)

"It is the general feeling of nurses today that present salaries are not commensurate with working conditions, education and responsibility of the position involved." Women would be encouraged to enter the nursing profession if:

. Nursing was promoted actively as a profession.
Older women were encouraged to enter nursing.

- Re-entry of the retired nurse is discouraged by:

  ...the economics of the problem
  the problem of re-education
  social attitudes to the working wife and/or mother.

- Bargaining were to improve conditions.

- Married women were allowed to earn larger amounts before their husbands lost them as a deduction (around $1,000.00).
  The expense of a babysitter could be deducted from income tax.
  (This is also a problem for the single nurse with dependants.)

- The nurse should be educated through:

  ...degree courses
  refresher courses readily available
  in-service education
  continuing education.

- Part-time workers should be utilized.

- Young people should be educated to play the dual role of woman.

5. MRS. RITA MORIN (Private brief)

Women should be concerned with strengthening the moral code. Advocated certain citizenship and labor welfare, based not on sex but qualification.

a. Labor: Women not given equal opportunities for promotion.
   What should be judged is personal suitability for the promotion.
   Equal pay and equal opportunity should be available.
   Women must learn to use the grievance procedures available to them.

b. Marriage and Divorce...children and adults suffer in divorce. Grounds for same must be mandatory...counselling necessary.

c. Welfare children...where possible unwed parents should marry to give child born out of wedlock a family.

d. Abortion...is not the Christian answer to this problem of unwanted children. (This lady is a Roman Catholic). Abortion is a moral issue, and the thin edge of the wedge to euthanasia.

e. Sex Education...should be given by the parents. Doctors and nurses and only SOME teachers should give same, as well.

6. DR. MARGARET VAN DER PITTE (Personal brief)

Compared the status of Canadian women to the status of the American Negro. She stated that status was contingent upon autonomy. Freedom, rights and responsibilities are related. Status and individuality are correlated. Married women are not acknowledged as individuals...at the border
on immigration
by businesses.

Discrimination is present in Canada against women. There are many parallels between status of American Negro and Canadian women. Negro conditioned into believing inferior. Women also conditioned as inferiors.

Women should not be allowed to bow out of Jury Duty.
Under Change of Name Act...women cannot initiate their own change of name ...must be signed by husband. Mass media should be encouraged to present women with dignity as full members of society.

7. THE VOICE OF WOMEN - EDMONTON

a. Women should be paid a wage for staying home and looking after children, at least until the youngest child reaches the age of 12 years.

b. Citizenship of children is determined by the father. They should be given a choice of father's or mother's.

c. Except where the wife files her own income tax return, taxes on husband's income up to $4,000.00 should be returned to the wife.

d. Something should be done to overcome women's apathy to their rights and responsibilities.

8. EDMONTON HOME ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION

These ladies asked for a complementary situation between the sexes.

a. More married women are entering the labor force. Day care facilities and in-home care for children should be promoted.

b. Both boys and girls should be given courses in the management of time and money. They should also be given home-oriented courses.

c. Older women should be encouraged to enter the human service fields as aides, etc.

d. Salaries...women should in fact receive equal pay for equal work.

e. Part-time work should be promoted through use of more flexible working hours.

f. Television should be used in education.

g. Political women...this aspect should be promoted in some way.

h. Home economics should be taught as a healing therapy and a learn skill.

9. EDMONTON WOMEN TEACHER'S CLUB

There is discrimination against women in school administrative positions, directly related to the Edmonton situation.

A teaching staff of 3,300 is 70% women. Yet there are only 3 women and 128 men principals. So on down the line. There is discrimination related to the level of the appointment. All levels should be open to those persons with the necessary qualifications.

10. KAREN HARDING...A brief for deserted, divorced and separated women

a. Family Court changes should be initiated to put teeth in laws regarding separation, maintenance, etc.

b. Training and retraining facilities should be made more readily available to these women.

c. Welfare payments should be adequate for proper family care.

d. Adequate police protection should be made available when requested.

e. Adequate community counselling services might help prevent marriage breakdown.

f. The single-parent is discriminated against.

g. Working mother or father should be able to deduct child care costs.

h. Housekeepers who come in for the day only should also be tax deductible.

i. Insurance, bank loans, mortgages should not be made so difficult for a single woman to secure.

11. MRS GRACE HAGUE (Private brief)

Estate tax problems would be alleviated if you could make payments on receipt of monthly increments from pensions, life insurance, etc., instead of having to round up the money all at once.

12. MRS. FAY LESLIE SPINKS (Private brief)

Problems of the older woman in the labor force. Corporations and businesses force women to retire before the men...yet their life expectancy is 8 years longer. Inequities here. Women should be able to retire at SAME age or at GREATER age than men because of this.

13. MRS. R. G. POWERS (Personal brief)

Women have equal rights but are unable to implement them. The physical well-being of women with children should be safeguarded. Washroom facilities across Canada should be checked for convenience and for sanitary conditions.

14. THE ALBERTA CO-OPERATIVE WOMEN'S GUILD

Provincial Acts refer to he, his and him. This should be looked into with a view to revising them to include the feminine gender.

15. FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION COUNCIL OF EDMONTON

...Concerned with day care, education and voluntary activities.

a. Day care facilities are needed. Steps should also be taken to care for the children from 6 to 12.

b. Education...family life education should be added to the curriculum.

c. Volunteer activities. Unpaid work should be considered as experience or training when the worker returns to labor force. Method of deciding seems to be problem.

16. MR. JACK THORPE...A private brief

A proposal for the establishment of a reception centre for Metis girls coming to town.

These girls can develop problems of alcoholism, venereal disease...are incarcerated...when they come to town.

Suggested recovery of the Metis girls through a reception centre in the city...and by working at the family level.

17. THE KEE-WEE TIN-NOK CREE ASSOCIATION (Mrs. Clara Yellowknee, Wabasca)

Women lack equality...and especially Indian women because basically of the economic problem of living on reserves.

. Poor housing conditions.
. Lack of educational facilities necessitates sending children away from home and family for their education.
. Rather than train local girls the government brings outsiders in at additional expense.

18. NATIVE WOMEN...Brief from Alberta Native Women's Conference.
(This group includes Indian and Metis)

a. There is an urgent need for extension of medical services into the isolated areas.

b. Water systems and garbage disposal units are badly needed.

c. Education...too many foreign teachers in Indian schools. These teachers can hardly speak English themsleves, let alone teach anyone else the language. Canadian teachers would be preferable.

...Parent-school committees should be encouraged.
...Indian counsellors are needed.
...The curriculum should be changed to meet the Indian's specific needs. References to Indians as "Savages" should be stricken from textbooks.

d. Youth coming to the city lack places to go and jobs to go to. They are exploited...become prostitutes, alcoholics and drug addicts. Halfway houses are needed for girls. These would be receiving and treatment centres staffed by rehabilitated native people. There should be two kinds of houses...a. for girls fresh from rural areas
b. for girls needing rehabilitation.

e. The Metis would like rights and services similar or equal to those of the Indians.

19. MRS. CLAIRE...speaking to brief of MRS. MURIEL SHAPKA.

Feminizing influences via the mass media inhibit the social growth of girls. Their physical capacities are inhibited...their social growth stinted. Laws should be passed eliminating discrimination because of sex. Girls should be encouraged to take part in a wider spectrum of sports.

20. THE FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF EDMONTON

Women's needs vary depending upon whether they are employed or not and depending upon the number of children they have. Some of these needs may be met by the following:

a. Day care when mother works. Recommend government and industry initiate same and assume responsibility for same. This would come under preventive welfare services.

b. Retraining of women requires...

...Adequate family support.
...Should be available to all women.
...Should be supplied in quantity and quality.
...Should take home capabilities into consideration.

c. Federal Taxation...Housekeeper's salary should be deductible.
Abolish estate taxes between marriage partners.

d. Marriage and Divorce...

...Counselling services needed.
...Social arm to the court.
...Reciprocal maintenance orders should be enforced.
...Financial analysis should be made on separation or divorce.
...There should be community of property between married persons.
...Common-law wives should be able to make claims against the estates.

e. Criminal Law...rehabilitative services for women expanded.

f. Abortion...on demand up to 3 months.
from 3 to 5 months, decided by a board.

g. The Indian and Metis...Legal rights and responsibilities of these women must be kept in mind.

...Counsel should be available to them in custody cases.
Facilities for education on the reserves should be improved.
Travellers' Aids should be set up to help these people coming from rural setting to urban.
Federal and provincial government efforts should be co-ordinated.

h. Consumer Credit...

Payment should not be demanded from the person who is not legally responsible for the debt.

People must be educated on the use of consumer credit.

Advertising must establish a code of ethics recognizing the family's needs.

Promote proper attitudes and education.

21. THE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN OF DAWSON CREEK

a. Equal pay Act should be enforced.

b. Income tax revisions should allow the wife $950.00 income without reduction of her exemption.

c. Estate tax should not be levied on assets not immediately available, such as monthly annuities.

d. Counselling, retraining and refresher courses are needed for women wishing to enter or re-enter the labor force.

e. Mass media can help with the status of women by helping create the proper attitude toward women and families.

22. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Femininity is pictured as exemplified by frilly clothes and being possessed by some man. The entire role of women and the entire concept of marriage should be re-examined. Women are being asked to choose between love and security or self-esteem. Actualization of roles which is being stressed is really transitory. Society accepts the double standard in their attitudes toward sex and sexuality. Sex in advertising should be investigated. Contraceptives and birth control information should be available to everyone, regardless of marital status.

23. MRS. JOHNSTON

Maternity leave should be legislated for women.

24. O'LEARY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The feeling that a woman is inferior starts in school. Girls are steered from some courses because these are traditionally boys-only courses. Girls are discouraged from taking physics and advised that girls take biology.

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